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THE MAGAZINE FOR MANUFACTURERS, DESIGNERS AND RETAILERS



AUGUST 1952 NUMBER 44

The Journal of Industrial Design

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The fastest birds of the air today are delta-winged, jet-driven. In a very few years, what more shall we look for there? Ram-jets?... Automatic isobar navigation?... That might be—or the use of the Coriolis forces which once were thought to guide migrating swallows...

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Design

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A vested interest in ugliness

MANUFACTURERS make goods, and retailers stock goods, in order to sell them, and if possible, make a profit. If they don't manage to do this they go out of business. The easiest way to achieve their aim is to supply what their customers want. But what do their customers want? In a period of rapid technological change such as ours it is by no means easy for customers to decide what they need, unless they are able to see all that is available and make comparisons. For instance, new types of housing and new ways of living call for new kinds of household equipment, just as new methods of production call for new types of machines.

In a small exhibition of contemporary furnishings in Shropshire recently many members of local Women's Institutes showed great interest. One woman remarked what a pity it was that the things were only made for export. When told that all were available in England, the textiles and furniture being in the tax-free range, she asked why such things were never seen in local shops. This is the theme of many letters received by the Council of Industrial Design from the provinces. Yet if one goes into many of the local shops one is confidently informed that there is no demand for such things in this town, yet one knows that less than 15 miles away a go-ahead retailer is building up a considerable business in precisely these things because he has taken pains to select them with care, show them in their right setting and sell them with enthusiasm.

Retailers who are so certain that the public will have ugliness at all costs and will reject new ideas are balanced by a similar group of manufacturers. And of course it is true that many of the public will buy the things with which they are familiar, however horrible they may be. Between them - public, retailer, manufacturer - a pretty solid vested interest in ugliness has been built up. But many cracks are appearing in the edifice, which was evidently built on poor foundations. The signs of mounting public interest in improving standards are plain to watchers of the skies. Naturally they are still hidden from those who adopt an ostrich-like attitude. Whatever may be our shortages in many directions there still seem to be ample supplies of these "two-legged birds" about. And they find plenty of sand around to tuck their heads in!

G.R.

Notebook

STREET NAMEPLATES

IN MAKING its recent suggestions for the design and siting of street nameplates, the Ministry of Transport has been careful to point out that "the aim is a good standard of design and not standardised design"; it is not suggested that "existing old plates of character and distinction should be replaced." These cautionary words are important for official orthodoxies in taste and design must be avoided like the plague if we are to maintain our English traditions.

At the same time the Ministry's Circular No 671 suggests some commonsense rules that should have universal application. No one would question either the wisdom or the latitude of the recommendation that "the lower edge of the plates should not be less than 2 feet 6 inches nor more than 12 feet above road level," while the suggested minimum clear space of at least 12 inches in every direction between the plates and any other printed matter seems almost too modest.

On the design of the nameplates themselves many of the recommendations are unexceptionable; wide, well-spaced lettering and plenty of plate area surrounding the lettering are obvious points that are often overlooked. Several sample letter forms are offered with the Circular — the serif letters specially prepared for street names by David Kindersley (reviewed in DESIGN February 1950), a sans serif Gill, a revised version of the Ministry of Transport sans serif alphabet, and Caslon Old Face. These suggestions are made on the advice of the Royal Fine Art Commission, but the Ministry emphasises that the illustration of these designs in no way precludes the use of others, not even, one assumes, of Gothic characters, for this thorny problem is grasped with a carefully gloved hand: "Gothic characters might hardly be appropriate in some cities famous for their Roman heritage."

DECORATION CENTRE

THERE HAS BEEN a missing link in the chain of influences affecting design in the home. The experimental designers, having practised their ideas in their own homes, are lucky if they can find a client to let them have a go or an exhibition house where they can try out their new schemes. Lively retailers keep their eyes on these experiments, and the magazine press

takes up an idea here and there and through its home pages helps to spread the new vision.

All these efforts are important but the customer or housewife will still be faced with a leap in the dark when she comes to do her own home. It is very hard to visualise a colour scheme or room arrangement from press photographs, however true the reproduction, or from a few bays in a furnisher's shop.

It is to fill this gap that *House & Garden*, the monthly magazine that has already done so much to lead new thought on interior design, has opened a floor in a West End house to be a permanent gallery or laboratory for new ideas on decoration.

This *House & Garden* Decoration Centre, which was opened last month by Gordon Russell at 16 Grafton Street, W1, will, we believe, provide a valuable service not only to the public but to retailers in and out of London who want to keep abreast of new trends in furnishing. The theme of the first exhibition — "Live Better for Less" — is likely to remain topical for years to come, but it would be a pity if such a Centre, free as it is from obligations to a particular market, should limit its scope to the sort of economic problems that are quite rightly tackled in furnishing show houses on Council estates. The social centre of gravity in this country is not yet so stable that design and designers may not sometimes profit from flying high.

SUCCESS FOR CANTERBURY

SELDOM CAN the work of a provincial art school have been so generally and deservedly praised as was the display from the Typography and Graphic Design Department of the Canterbury College of Art that was recently shown to Londoners at the Fetter Lane premises of the Monotype Corporation. Professor Nikolaus Pevsner, who opened the exhibition, confessed astonishment at the excellence of the work on view. He also paid the show the compliment, rare among exhibition openers, of closely studying the exhibits before appraising them.

This exhibition deserves a wider showing, and so does the international collection of post-war printing design called "Purpose and Pleasure" that was recently shown at the Bedford Square offices of Lund Humphries. Great advances are being made in this country in the design and quality of printed matter but interest is still confined to a limited circle of enthusiasts. Such exhibitions, if seen widely enough, could do much to quicken general appreciation.

P.R.



At last a contemporary film set

FOR ALL THE MONEY and care spent by film producers on designing and dressing their sets the film industry up till now has seemed singularly blind to contemporary trends in architectural and interior design. Every film made about present-day life could be a vehicle for showing the interesting designs that are today coming from our factories, but opportunity after opportunity is missed. An art director must no doubt be a realist; he must show things as they are. We do not yet suggest that a studio miner's cottage should be furnished like an Ideal Home Exhibition house, but why should a business man or a director of an aircraft company not be shown surrounded by furnishings that are as up to date as the office equipment on his desk or the limousines in which he is swept from his factory to his home? The reason may be that the companies that hire furniture to the studios have nothing new in stock.

We welcome therefore the initiative of the film company Group 3 Ltd in drawing on "Design

Review" for the furniture used to dress the set here illustrated; it shows a modern newspaper editor's office in the film *To Tell You the Truth*, produced by Colin Lesslie and John Grierson, directed by Pennington Richards. The art director and set designer, Michael Stringer, has chosen contemporary furniture by George Hammer Ltd and Hille & Co, a desk lamp by Merchant Adventurers Ltd and textiles by David Whitehead Ltd.

The files of "Design Review" are open to all film companies and theatrical producers, as well as to architects, retailers and the Press for consultation; and manufacturers of a wide range of durable consumer goods are invited to submit their interesting new products for inclusion. All submissions and enquiries to Mark Hartland Thomas, OBE, Chief Industrial Officer, Council of Industrial Design, Tilbury House, Petty France, London SW1 (Telephone WHITEHALL 6322). A selection of products from *Design Review* are illustrated on pages 4-7 of this issue of DESIGN.

Introducing a new feature:

REVIEW OF CURRENT DESIGN



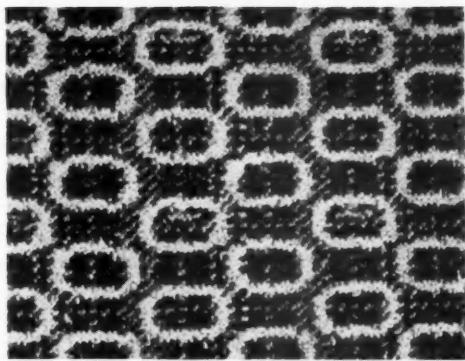
Right: Unit furniture is today less box-like than it was in the 1930's, more interesting in its details and more flexible in arrangement. These drawer and cupboard units, with unscrewable legs, are finished in a gold-brown Pal Dao veneer with solid edges in Sepetir. The handles may be wooden or brass. In the centre is a low movable coffee table. The hanging laminated wood shelves are adjustable. All tax free; designed by Robert Heritage for G. W. Evans Ltd.

MANY READERS OF DESIGN in the retail trade have found our news and illustrations of products useful guides for their own merchandising programmes. To meet the demand for well-designed goods from many industries we start this month a regular feature illustrating British articles in current production. The products chosen for illustration are not necessarily the latest from the factories, but all come up to the standard of design that would make them acceptable for "Design Review," the photographic index of current designs which is open for inspection at the Council of Industrial Design's London headquarters (see page 34).

Left: *Spring Morn*, a fresh treatment of familiar themes on printed linen. A good example of a modern furnishing fabric that would go well with period or contemporary furniture. A safe buy for those who might shy of some of the advanced abstract designs. Designed by James Wade for Heal's Wholesale and Export Ltd.



Right: There has not until lately been much choice in carpets for the home between plain self-coloured carpets and conventional florals, orientals or seedy relics of jazzy modernism. Here is a new overall pattern for an Axminster *Genoese* body designed by J. G. M. Palmer for John Crossley & Sons Ltd.



Left: Until some radical innovation in construction or operation comes along there is bound to be a similarity among gas-cookers. Differences of detail and trim are the points to watch - for instance the safety gas taps that have to be pressed in to turn on and the automatic ignition for all burners of this *Raymond* cooker designed for General Gas Appliances Ltd by Raymond Loewy.

Left, below: The problem of leg room has been well solved in this Nigerian cedar and teak gate leg table designed by R. D. Russell for E. Gomme Ltd. Note also the good clearance between rails and floor.

Below: The most fidgety feature in new houses is often the tiled fireplace surround. This well-mannered model by Broad and Co Ltd is designed for approved convection heating appliances and incorporates intake vents and controllable louvres.





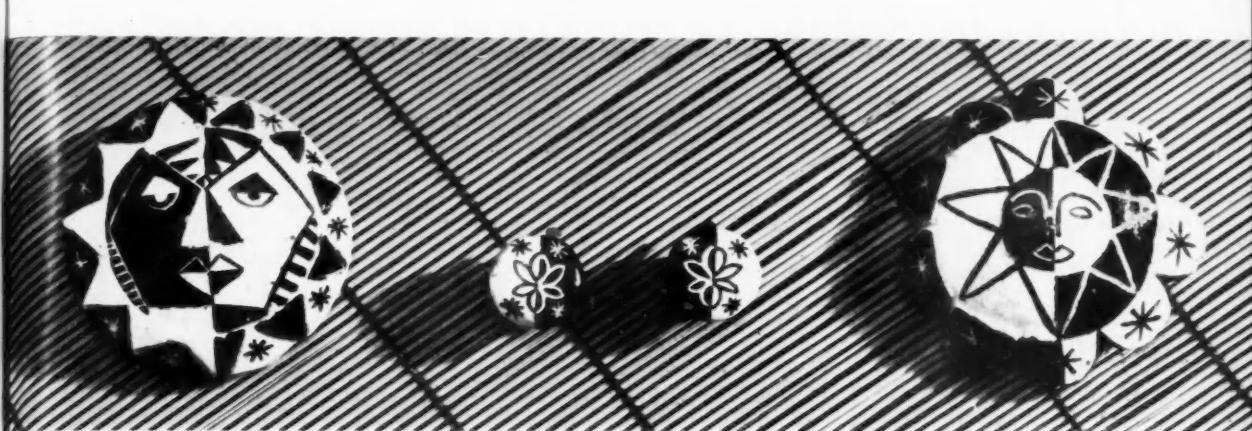
Suitcases should be smart, practical and well finished. Above: *Vogue-Suitor* man's wardrobe case designed by John W. Waterer for S. Clarke & Co Ltd is made of English coach or bag hide, combines lightness with strength, has a built-in tubular metal coat hanger and separate division for shoes.

Right: Soft top and bottom of the cases in this *Pendragon* matching luggage set for ladies make it fairly light and less rigid for packing. The set comprises 26in. and 22in. weekend cases, 16in. hat case and train case; the sliding tray in the latter enables articles beneath it to be seen and taken out without removing the tray. Designed and made by Papworth Industries Ltd in analine stained hide and red, grey or black vaunch hide.



The mass-produced glass tankard sets a designer several problems. It is a moulded product and so should not try to imitate cut glass; at the same time a traditional character will probably be called for. This is a good solution by Chance Bros Ltd, its ribbed sides and nicked handle providing a sure grip.





Above: Plenty of new thought is needed in costume jewellery design and designers should be encouraged to experiment with new patterns and materials. These colourful, studiedly primitive ceramic pieces are designed by J. McHale.



This well-known lock is a thoroughly satisfactory piece of industrial design. Its operation gives great security and has won approval in the insurance world. Its smooth self-effacing lines make it acceptable both internally and externally on many types of door. Designed by J. W. Taylor and L. W. Young for Ingersoll Locks Ltd.



In this modern necklace and bracelet quality of materials (silver and fine gold and translucent enamel) are matched by delicacy of detail which is carried through to the fastenings. Designed by Barbara de Foubert.

The addresses of manufacturers or designers named in this Review of Current Design may be had on request from "Design Review," Council of Industrial Design, Tilbury House, Petty France, London SW1.

COMMON SENSE in car design

by E. G. M. WILKES, MSIA

WE HAVE HEARD so much about the appearance of cars from engineers, directors, salesmen, journalists, and the owners themselves, that it was very refreshing to read George Williams' views (DESIGN, April 1952, page 16) as representing the industrial designer. Since I find myself in complete agreement with Mr Williams, I can only enlarge upon some of the points raised.

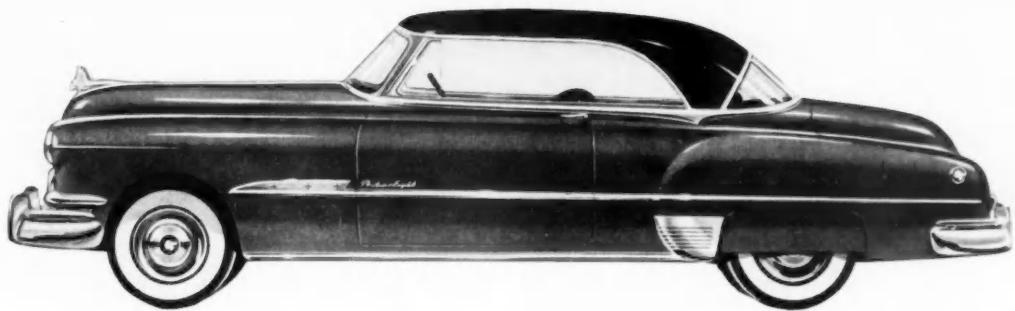
The necessity for an industrial designer ("stylist" to the motor industry), and the reason for his comparatively recent introduction to the industry, are nowadays understood and accepted by the engineering department and the management alike. And yet in spite of this there is very often a wide difference of opinion between industrial designer and management on anything connected with visual design. To many car manufacturers the industrial designer is merely an "ideas" man, concerned with novelty and with no right of decision.

The ideal procedure is for the modern motor-car to be conceived with the overall construction and form of its visual components having a direct relation to functional, economic and production requirements. The hand of the artist should be evident in the arrangement and perfection of the shapes, giving them the right characteristics for the job and the right degree of individuality. The result is bound to be satisfactory, as can be seen in many Italian and American cars where there is a strong feeling of the hand of the expert in their visual design.

In his article, George Williams referred to the "modern idiom" as a rather vague quality, but I do not think he meant to imply that it is not noticeable. It obviously exists as the visual characteristic of our era: based very largely on engineering shapes because this is a mechanical age. One senses its existence in all forms of good design. It is something more than a

"fashion" for it has not been invented by the industrial designer. Rather it is something which has evolved naturally, under the influence of manufacturing and economic conditions, materials, etc. Anyone who visited the South Bank Exhibition must have sensed this modern idiom very strongly in architecture, display, industrial design and even in the use of colour and decoration. It is difficult to define, although Walter Teague in his book *Design This Day* refers to one aspect of it by stressing the long straight, or almost straight, line ending in a short curve, as being our characteristic "line of beauty." It certainly exists in some of the most successful post-war cars where it has very strong practical advantages. Again, it is the main characteristic of all modern aircraft and many ships.

This, then, is an outline of the industrial designer's attitude towards car design; an attitude which is somewhat different from that adopted by those actually responsible for design policy in the motor industry in this country, if one can judge from their results. Although they may profess to follow the above approach, they are in fact side-tracked by recollections of the design idioms of the late 'thirties; a rather poor period of design that gave us drooping lines, ogee curves, strips of chromium moulding, winged badges and a tendency to visualise everything in terms of lines rather than form. There is also a belief that industrial design is entirely a matter of personal opinion when it comes to questions of appearances, in so far as there are no standards of good or bad. This again, is surely a direct result of the immediate pre-war attitude when the main idea of styling was to pounce on, and incorporate, anything that was thought to be the latest fashion, either streamlined or modernistic, quite regardless of any reasoned application. Certainly we can take many a



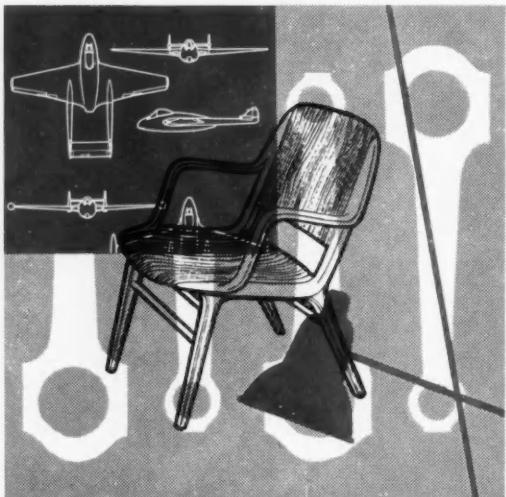
The existence of standards of basic form, and the hand of the expert in their treatment, is evident in most American cars such as the Pontiac above.



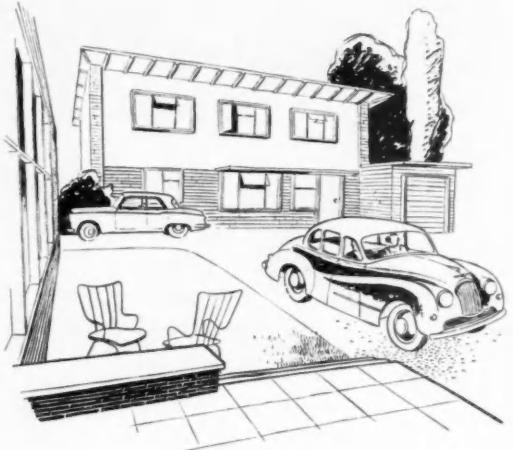
An Italian Fiat with bodywork by Ghia showing similar features to the American cars because there are only a limited number of satisfactory answers to the same general problems. Again there is the hand of the expert in selecting, detailing and arranging these features, and giving them individuality at the same time.



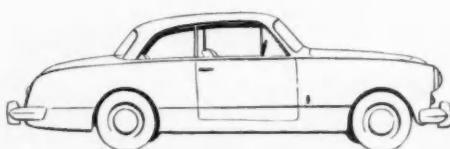
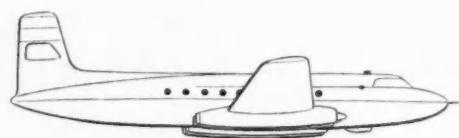
American Nash with Italian coachwork by Farina. No attempt to create new forms because both countries have reached the same conclusions in this respect; only a cleanliness of treatment and a reduction in ornament.



The beauty of engineering shapes is the dominant feature of the design of our age.



One would expect post-war architecture and the post-war car to be companions, as, indeed, is the car shown in the background. And yet the car in the foreground, typical of so many post-war English cars, looks sadly out of place. Perhaps this is why it is invariably shown beside some medieval castle or half-timbered house, in manufacturers' advertisements.



A typical modern plane - the Avro Canada - a modern yacht designed by Laurent Giles, and the new French car, the Comète, all showing the vigorous convex line referred to by Teague.

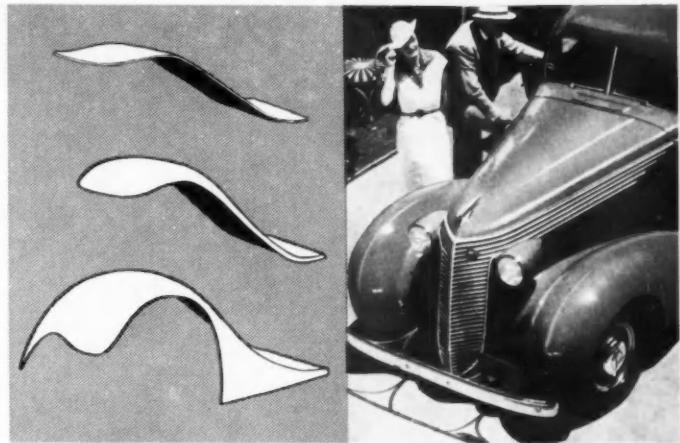
modern English car and put it in a setting of good contemporary design, and it will look quite out of place. The modern idiom itself is completely lacking.

The inability to appreciate form is, unfortunately, a rather universal failing in this country at the moment. It is particularly so in the case of the mass-produced pressed-steel car body, where form is by far the most important feature. As a result too much stress is placed on line, surface finish and decoration. Many poorly shaped cars are made quite presentable in a camouflage of shiny black paint and chromium plate. In particular, their poor shape tends to encourage the use of chromium, while the importance given to lines rather than forms results in the continued use of the ogee curve. This line, with its lazy return sweep, is quite definitely the "line of beauty" of an earlier era. It suited the bent-wood form of carriage mudguards, because a bent sheet is essentially a two-dimensional effect. It was a perfectly satisfactory way to treat the mudguards of cars up to about 1933, because it was still a two-dimensional bent shape in spite of the shallow flanging at the edges. But, as soon as a side valence was added to reduce mud slinging and to hide the chassis, the whole character of the mudguard changed. The ogee sweep then produced a most unsatisfactory form: heavy at the front, very weak above the wheel, suddenly getting very thick behind the wheel and then quickly tapering away to nothing at the running-board. In contrast to

this the American designer developed a new wing form to meet the changed conditions, and never once reverted to the ogee line. By about 1938 he had achieved some very satisfactory shaping with considerable perfection of detail. Throughout the 'thirties, English manufacturers seemed to hesitate between taking the old form and trying to make it satisfy a new condition by adding a valence. They accepted the American lead, but lacked sadly the refinement of shape.

Since the war we have seen another changing condition affecting wing design, namely, full-width bodies. Again the American designer quickly found the best answer by running the wing into the side of the body. He found the best crown line for this new wing, which is nearly horizontal, and fitted a horizontal grille to allow for a wide bonnet, which regained the engine accessibility that had been threatened by the height of the new wing. In addition, he fitted lamps into the nose of the wing where they are out of the way of the wide bonnet, give the best appearance, and comply with the minimum height regulations. Here it is interesting to note that although the Americans did all the developing of these new features, the Germans and Italians can probably claim to have originated them in 1937-8 on their special racing saloon cars that they used for long distance events and record breaking.

That, very briefly, is the evolution of one item – a wing – and there is not the slightest evidence to show that the various changes were meaningless fashions. Each change was an industrial designer's answer to certain new requirements. Even the present-day Italian designers, who can have no desire

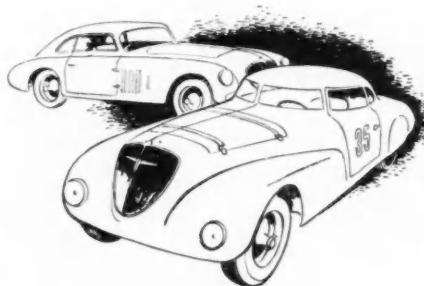


So long as a car mudguard was a bent sheet, the ogee curve was a perfectly satisfactory treatment. It was still satisfactory in the later pressed wings but as soon as the wing grew a deep side valence and more wrap round forward of the wheel, an unsatisfactory effect resulted. The Americans realised that a new design problem had been created and quickly found the answer as shown in the pre-war Studebaker.

to copy American work, use exactly the same design features because they know them to be the logical answer to exactly the same problems. The differences are brought about by the type of car and national characteristics of the two countries – admiration of the machine on the one hand and love of display on the other.

If we take at random six English cars and contrast them with this brief sketch of the quick and natural evolution of car design, we find that designers in this country are still dithering between ogee wing line, the intermediate stage of wing, and the new wing; or between every conceivable form of vertical and horizontal grille, and even, horror of horrors, a compromise of both. One manufacturer will fit lamps in the wings to be up to date, whilst the next will fit them in the catwalk to be different, and so on. Although we make a far greater variety of sizes and types of car than most other countries, that can provide no excuse for this state of affairs.

I believe that a car (unless it is of a special type) should look precisely what it is – a comfortable speedy machine, safe, compact, sleek and light in weight. I think this is a popular conception of a car because admiration and pride of possession of any efficient piece of engineering is a universal trait. Not many people are very thrilled by a car that looks high and narrow, or bulbous and heavy, or sedate to the extent



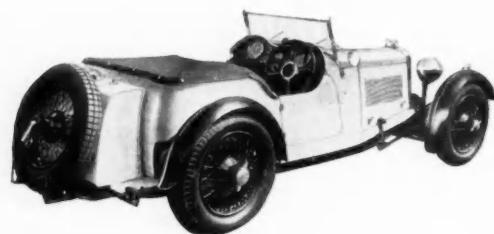
The Adler racing car of 1937 and, behind, the streamlined Alfa Romeo saloon that raced at Le Mans before the war. Both were forerunners of many of today's body shapes.



This selection of English cars shows that there are no standards by which they may be judged. Confusion of thought on the part of designers means that there is even more confusion on the part of the public as to what a car should look like. Top to bottom: Austin Atlantic, Jaguar Mark VII, Standard Vanguard, Triumph Mayflower, Morris Minor, Austin 7.

of being static in appearance. There is no mystery in achieving any of the popular features in any car. It is purely a matter of applying commonsense laws or fundamentals of design; horizontal lines to give length and reduce apparent height, flattish panels and small radii to reduce apparent weight, body and grille shapes that pull inwards towards the base to give poise (the reverse of the pyramid form), and countless others.

Every now and again, a car emerges that is so good in appearance that one feels that nothing could be done to improve it. The 3.3 litre Bugatti racing car of 1934, many pre-war coachbuilt bodies on Rolls-Royce or Bentley chassis, the *La Salle* of 1938 and the *Rover* of the same period, are examples that come to mind. The Bugatti is the work of that rather rare person -



Between 1910 and 1935 there is ample evidence of the existence of standardised body form, that varies in detail only from make to make or year to year. This 1934 Aston Martin shows the degree of perfection eventually achieved with a standardised form of 2-4 seater sports tourer.

This arrangement of bonnet, grille, lamps and wings, owes its attraction to the fact that it was, in its day, the logical answer to a design problem, pursued to the limit, and not side-tracked by desire for novelty of appearance.



the engineer-artist; the coachbuilt body is the work of the craftsman perfecting long accepted principles; and the *La Salle* is the work of the specialist industrial designer. None of these cars is revolutionary in any way, but each represents perfection of accepted basic forms.

One interesting but not really surprising feature of the industrial designer's approach to car appearance as outlined above, is that the practical features such as body space, seating position, vision, head clearance, luggage space, engine accessibility, etc., and the desirable effect of low build, light weight, elegance, and the development of good shapes, are all features that harmonise, overlap and assist each other. No one ideal is fighting the other, and everything builds up in the same direction. But how difficult a problem is presented when the high-level management, believing that industrial design is a matter of opinion, demands a bewildering and conflicting medley of ideas. The result is a car full of the indecisive touch of the amateur stylist, and that, unfortunately, is becoming the characteristic of the post-war English car.

I feel that I cannot do better than finish with an extract from Le Corbusier's book *Towards a New Architecture*. In his chapter on automobiles he says: "The motor-car is an object with a simple function (to travel), and complicated aims (comfort, resistance, appearance), which have forced on big industry the absolute necessity of standardisation. All motor-cars have the same essential arrangements. But by reason of the unceasing competition between the innumerable firms who make them, every maker has found himself obliged to get to the top of this competition and, over and above the standard of practical realisation, to prosecute the search for a perfection and harmony beyond the mere practical side, a manifestation not only of perfection and harmony but of beauty." He sums up by saying: "We must aim at the fixing of standards in order to face the problem of perfection.

"The Parthenon is a product of selection applied to a standard.

"Architecture operates in accordance with standards.

"Standards are a matter of logic, analysis, and minute study: they are based on a problem which has been well 'stated.'

"A standard is definitely established by experiment."

That was written in 1923, but we can see the truth of it in those fine English and Continental sports cars of the 'twenties, the specialist coachbuilder's achievements of the 'thirties, the American cars of 1937-9, and in many of the more recent American and



The Ford Consul and the Hillman Minx are two English cars that follow the same satisfactory approach to design and appearance problems as the Italians and Americans.

Italian cars. All are a result of Le Corbusier's "perfection of a standard," and today's standards are already much in evidence for those with eyes to see. This does not imply monotony or uniformity of appearance to the extent that all cars look alike. It merely means that there are not unlimited answers to the same problems that exist in any one type of car. There are, for example, only about four basic wing formations to the modern full-width body which can be considered really satisfactory, although the individual details and proportions and sections of these wing forms can vary very considerably.

Continued indecision and the constant search for novelty will get us nowhere because, apart from involving bad design, it fails to establish any standards by which a car may be judged.

Front cover picture: Although only a guess at future developments this front view of a scale model shown in the Transport building at the South Bank Exhibition last year, points to the fact that in car design completely new engineering requirements can bring about a new appearance.

In modern architecture plain solid slabs of concrete have given way to lighter, more elegant constructions. This development is seen, for instance, in the work of Wells Coates, a British pioneer of the contemporary manner. Right, his Isokon Flats, Hampstead; below left, his flats at 10 Palace Gate, W8; below, right, his design for proposed Television Studios for the South Bank Exhibition.

1932-4



1938



1950



1930

The high puritan phase of interior design, square, spare and bare; a room of the early '30s in off-white and bottle-green.



1936

A flat at Highgate, still lean and unencumbered but with some concessions to pattern on the walls and form in the furniture.

The changing face of MODERN DESIGN

and what it may mean commercially

BY PAUL REILLY

TWO RECENT EXHIBITIONS in New York and London have both made the point that modern design has moved on from its severe functional phase to something more friendly and relaxed. The New York exhibition, "New Design Trends," at the Museum of Modern Art set out frankly to show how the modern style has changed by comparing pairs of objects, one made before and one after the last war. The London exhibition, "Tomorrow's Furniture," at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, was a rather different exercise but the new experimental pieces were supported by a photographic history of modern furniture from 1900 onwards, and from this record it was clear that geometry is being replaced by something more fluid, that



fitness for purpose is being tempered with other considerations.

These trends have, of course, been remarked many times by those whose study is to keep abreast of contemporary work, but from repeated comment in the Press and elsewhere the consuming public still appear to be convinced that what is contemporary must be either chill and bleak or plain and simple according to one's disposition.

A time lag in appreciation of contemporary work is probably inevitable; the practising designers and the artist craftsmen must be ahead of the average taste if they are to make any contributions to the future, and the teachings of the propagandists must take several



1946

An exhibition room from "Britain Can Make It"; more variety in colour and pattern but a bit stripey and spiky by present standards.



1950

An Ideal Home exhibition room, closer to popular ideas of homeliness with more furniture in warmer woods.



1930

An experimental chair cut and moulded from a single sheet of plywood (Heal and Son Ltd.).



1950

A contemporary Danish chair of moulded plywood, less startling, more acceptable to conventional tastes (designed by Peter Hvidt and O. Mølgaard Nielsen, made by Fritz Hansen's Eftsl; photo by Bonytt, Oslo).



16

years to win a commercial following. That this is so is witnessed by the sort of three-tiered structure of taste that is observable on our own home market today. The mass market, representing the taste of those who like what they know and irrespective of income, still favours enrichment and ornament and the outward appearance of value for money; it is well supplied by industry with all manner of embellishment, whether in the form of sun burst veneers, scalloped shapes, tassels, mouldings, or what the reformers used to call "meaningless decoration".

By contrast the middle tier of the market, that is the taste of those who know what they like, having absorbed over the last thirty years the teachings of the pioneers and of the Design and Industries Association, is either timidly afraid of decoration or is puritanically convinced that plain surfaces and straight edges are preferable to patterns and curves. The Council of Industrial Design struck evidence of this when it tried to interest its audiences in some prettily patterned wallpapers in one of its touring exhibitions; the comments book revealed an articulate preference for off-white, or at boldest for embossed porridge. The size of this market is difficult to assess, but because it is susceptible to guidance it is likely to accept the changes that are already noticeable in the topmost tier, which, as was seen last year in the



1930s

Pre-war modern upholstered chair with wooden arms and adjustable back. The problem is solved in its bare essentials, with a severe angularity. (Gordon Russell Ltd.)

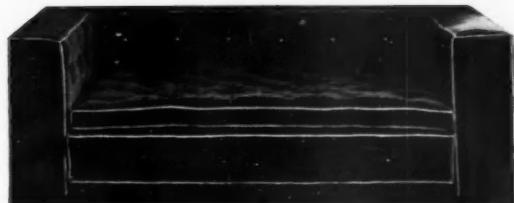
1952

Today's wittier solution of a like problem; more curves, a lighter appearance for being lifted off the ground, greater interest in shape, pattern and texture. (H.K. Furniture Ltd.)

Festival and again at the two exhibitions already mentioned, is now toying with the more human virtues of colour, texture, pattern and shape.

This humanising of contemporary design is seen in many fields from architecture to print; plain, solid slabs of concrete have given way in the best contemporary building to lighter, more elegant constructions, with as much attention to "detailing" as was previously given to the suppression of all "detail"; in type the return of the serif and even of decorated letter forms is evidence of the same trend. Even the grammar of criticism has changed; where the pre-war moderns extolled boldness, simplicity, economy and logic, the critics today look for lightness, elegance and charm, but without, be it noted, any wishful recalling of past styles. The new decorative forms are as little retrospective as was the geometrical precision of the 'thirties.

The commercial interest of these developments should be plain. If it is true that the mass market will always tend towards decoration and ornament, it follows that the intellectual puritanism of the early modern movement could have little chance of popular appeal; there was bound to be an unbridgeable gap between the tastes of the few and the instincts of the many; the few recruits that the modern movement won before the war among the middle and professional



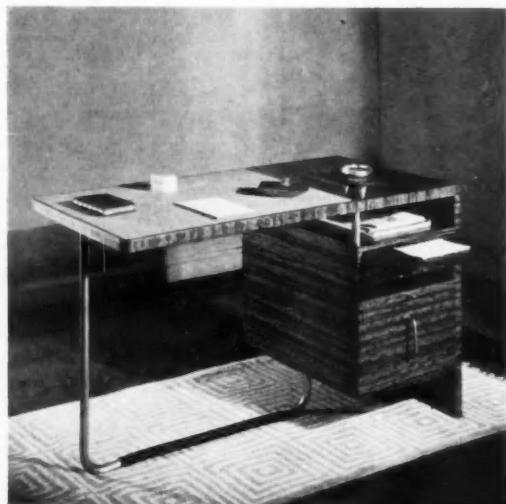
1930s

A fashionable settee in its day, bulky and chunky with straight lines and right-angles emphasised by light-coloured piping.



1951

A settee for the same purpose and capacity but full of modelling and movement. (H.K. Furniture Ltd)



1936

A practical small office desk embodying favourite features of its day - bent chromium tube and slab blockboard construction (designed by E. Maxwell Fry).



1948

The same function fulfilled but with less emphasis on function, more attention to finish and detailing. (Designed by Dennis Lennon, made by Dunns of Bromley.)



1928 : 1946

A pair of chairs from the "New Design Trends" exhibition in the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Left: designed by Le Corbusier 1928; right: designed by Finn Juhl 1946.



1930s



1951

classes could never add up to a substantial enough market to interest industry. Today, however, there is every chance that the more human and decorative qualities of contemporary design will strike a chord in tune with popular taste. The crowds that flock to any exhibition of contemporary furnishing suggest at least that the people are not put off by the new ideas in furniture, light fittings and textiles; there is a familiarity between what they see and what they know and that is half the battle. We may not yet have reached the stage, once forecast by H. S. Goodhart-Rendel, of responding as readily to rosebuds as we once reacted to bare walls, but at least the comment of the elderly New York negress looking at a piece of early modern skeletal furniture: "It's all right, but there's no love in it": would not hold for the best that is done today. The contemporary designer now uses his heart as well as his head.

In few industries is the trend towards lightness and elegance more marked than in metal furniture, due partly to the current popularity of bent rod in place of tube but also expressed in more fluid lines. Above left: a standard product of the 1930s by Pel Ltd. Left: an Antelope chair by Ernest Race designed for the Festival of Britain.



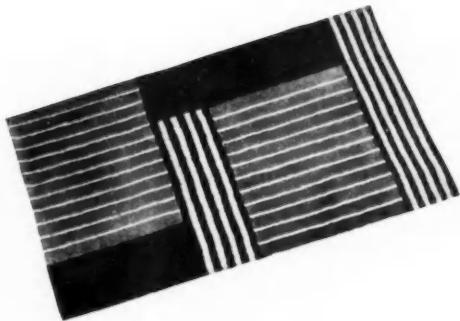
1932

1945

1952

1952

Textiles, too, show the trend towards movement and lightness, particularly in abstract treatments. Left to right: a precise, careful damask by Donald Brothers Ltd; a more vigorous screen print by Edinburgh Weavers; a contemporary variation of the oval, careful in composition but casual in line, by Gayonne Ltd; a typical contemporary abstract of freely spaced, currently fashionable shapes, by D. Whitehead Ltd.



Modern floor and wall coverings are moving away from simple geometry. The rug above and the plain striped wallpaper were good examples of this vogue. The lower pair show more relish for detail and for familiar leafy themes viewed afresh. (Rugs: Alastair Morton for Morton Sundour Fabrics Ltd and Elizabeth Forbes for Heal & Son Ltd. Wallpapers: A. Sanderson & Sons Ltd and Jacqueline Groag for John Line & Sons Ltd.)





1946

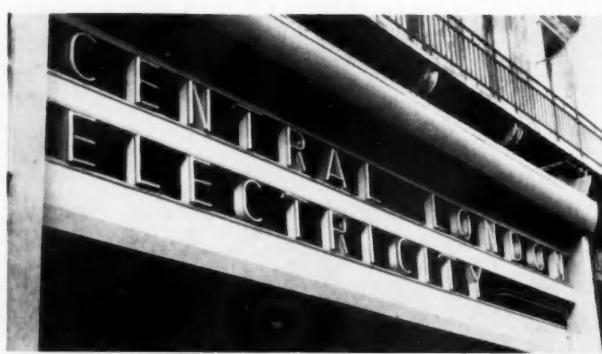
The modern desk light, too, has become less rigid, more fanciful, with more interest in contrast and texture. Left to right: A. B. Read for Troughton & Young Ltd; Paul Boissevain for Merchant Adventurers Ltd; A. B. Read for Troughton & Young Ltd.



1949



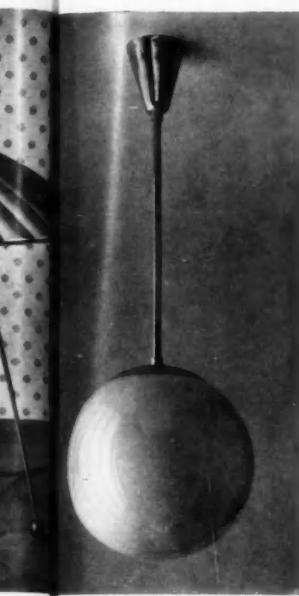
1950



1938

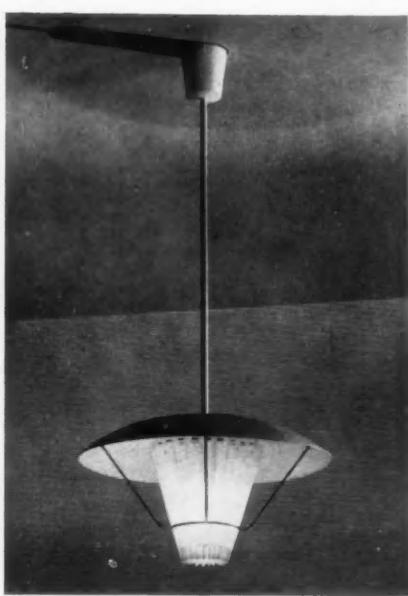
Two title pages for Penrose Annual. Left, as designed by Jan Tschichold for the 1938 volume, right, a specimen by the same designer commissioned by Penrose Annual to illustrate his 1949 manner.

Left above: Plain pre-war fascia lettering by E. Maxwell Fry, designed for neon lighting; below, decorated letters used on the South Bank by R. Y. Goodden, R. D. Russell and R. Guyatt, designers of the pavilion.

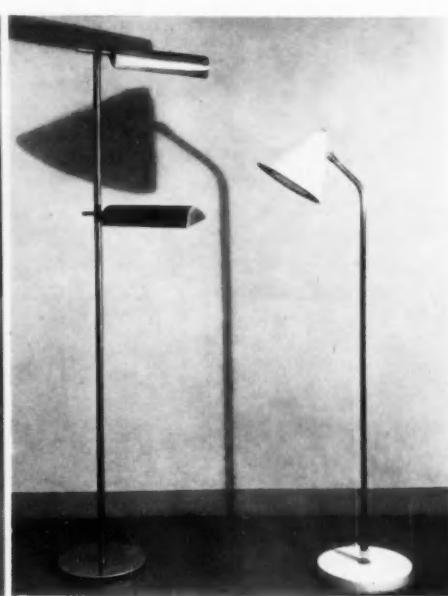


1930

Ceiling pendants too: left, the popular frosted 'football' of the 1930s by A. B. Read for Troughton & Young Ltd; right, a 1952 model by the General Electric Co Ltd.



1952

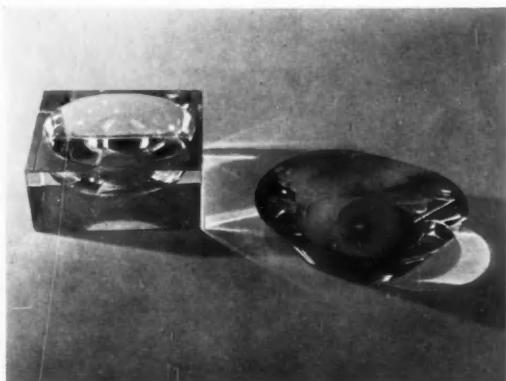


1940

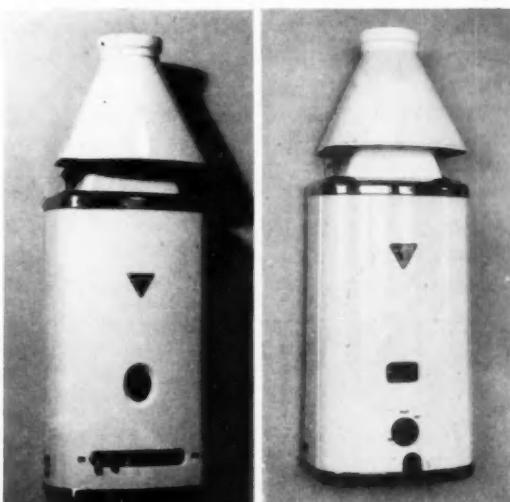
And lamp standards: a pair from the Museum of Modern Art, left by Peter Pfisterer, 1940, right by Ostuni, 1951.

On the front cover and below are two sets of paired glass exhibits from the Museum of Modern Art exhibition, the theme of which was that "emphasis (in modern design) has shifted from formal clarity and geometric precision to a new and softer mood expressed in a greater fluidity of line and a more relaxed appearance." Below: ashtrays by Frederick Cader and Luigi Fontana. Cover: vases, left, by Paolo Venini 1951, right, by Alvar Aalto 1937.

1930



1944



Cautionary footnote. Change is not in itself a virtue. Where function, appearance, materials and manufacturing convenience are all properly served by a design, it can expect long life, with only minor modifications. This Ascot water heater did not need much external revision over 20 years. Left 1930, right 1951.

A planned design programme for soft drinks

SOME OF THE LIVELIEST packaging and display design since the war has been commissioned by makers of fruit squashes and table waters. Their brighter, more attractive labels have usually followed some change of management or of marketing policy and the result has generally been increased sales.

The latest recruit to this movement for fresher presentation of well-established table waters is one of London's oldest firms in the business, Clayton Brothers, founded in 1838. The decision to revise the company's design policy was taken two years ago and the new designs are now coming onto the market. The designer appointed to carry out the new policy was W. M. de Majo, MBE, MSIA; he has worked in close co-operation with the company's two directors of sales and production and with their advertising agents, Armstrong-Warden Ltd.

The problem of the bottle was the first to be tackled. Previously the company had used various stock bottles without sufficient character to be identifiable at a glance as Clayton's; the old labels too, although carrying a standard script type lettering, had



little consistency of design or colouring. De Majo's staff put in a year's work developing with the various manufacturers a new standard shape for the Clayton bottle, a new cork stopper, aluminium foil pleated closure and a range of labels. Over fifteen models and prototypes were made before the final choice.

The finally approved bottle is lighter in weight than those previously used, has a recessed waistline round the centre for easier handling, which incidentally helps to protect the label, and a recessed ring round the neck to prevent drips. As an added attraction and point of identification the sides of the bottle above and below the waist have been given an embossed "bubble" pattern, which is picked up again by a ring of white dots at the base of the foil closure. The foil

Some of the prototypes made before the final version of Clayton's squash bottle was approved are seen below. Bottles in clay, wood and perspex were produced.

At top of page: The advertisement used in London's tube trains which links up with press advertisements and counter display-cards. Lettering is in green and black on a yellow and white background.





The squash bottle's predecessors (left) did not have sufficient character to be recognised at a glance as Clayton's although the bottle second from left became known to the trade as the "square" bottle. Note the grip waist of the new bottles and the simplified labels which have enabled considerable reduction of cost.

closures exactly match the colours of the labels, each fruit being given a different colour. The labels are clean, bright and forthright, the word "Clayton's" appearing in a yellow square serif type on each coloured field above a white oval carrying the description of the drink. The company decided that this design was sufficiently distinctive to allow them to drop their old "Iceberg" trademark which would have involved additional production costs without adding much to the sales appeal.

The change-over from the old to the new bottles is being done gradually. At the same time the new designs are being supported by newspaper advertising and counter display material emphasising that it is the same drink in a new bottle. The cards and counter displays have also been designed by W. M. de Majo

with type and colours in keeping with the bottles. A further step in the company's planned design programme is the redesign of the Clayton delivery trucks; until new vehicles are procured the existing ones are being recoloured and re-lettered by the same design consultants.

The initial reaction of the retail trade has satisfied Clayton Brothers of the wisdom of their new consistent design policy.

CREDITS

Client : Clayton Brothers (E. Wyer & Sons Ltd)

Designers : W. M. de Majo, MBE, MSIA
Assistant designer for new bottle: N. Stevenson, LSIA
Assistant designer for label and general presentation: D. S. Rabley

Advertising Agents : Armstrong-Warden Ltd, London

Bottles produced by : Jackson Bros (of Knottingley) Ltd, Yorks.
Redfearn Brothers, Barnsley, Yorks.

Labels produced by : The Drayton Printing Works, London, SW6
Fell & Briant Ltd, Wallington, Surrey

Cork stoppers produced by : Rankin Brothers & Sons, 139 Bermondsey St, London SE1

Aluminium closures produced by : Ideal Capsules Ltd, Edinburgh Avenue, Slough, Bucks.



This counter display is in green, white and yellow, the colour scheme used for all Clayton's new printed matter and for their redesigned delivery trucks.

Furniture from France

THE FRENCH see their country as a Republic in which *l'individualisme est Roi*, and in all their works this imperviousness to the influence of others is apparent. Although obviously owing some debts to Scandinavia on the one hand, and Italy on the other, French post-war furniture design seems at times to have been more eager to insist on going its own way than to have been sure that it had a way to go. The problems that confront the French furnisher are similar to those existing throughout the world - a housing shortage leading to a great reduction in living space and a consequent simplification of furniture with the emphasis on space - and weight-saving. Yet it is only with great reluctance that the French are accepting the concept of good quantity-produced furniture.

The highlight of the French furnishing year is the Salon des Arts Ménagers, which shows every kind of interior, from the ideal home to hospitals or schools. The Salon, which is under the directorship of Paul Breton, ably demonstrates each year that, despite the individual character revealed in their products, the French can co-operate to put on a first-class exhibition of recurrent interest to those concerned with the arts of domestic life. Current French developments can be seen in the accompanying photographs taken at the 21st Salon held earlier this year. Of particular interest is the continued French devotion to cane and wicker (see DESIGN June 1950 p. 29 where we noted the work of Louis Sognot in bringing this material back to favour). One might almost say cane is to the French what moulded plywood is to the Americans. H.L.



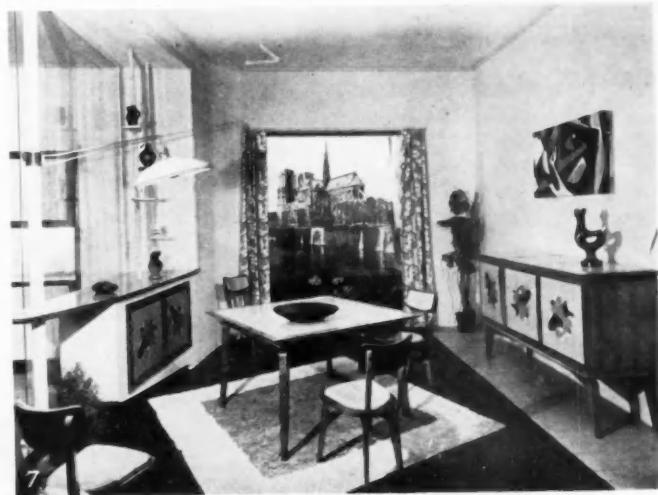
1: Used together, cane and wood make a happy combination of materials. A Danish influence can be seen in the dining-chairs.

2 and 4: Although tubular furniture of the 1920s and 1930s no longer finds favour for domestic use, steel rod and light-weight tube are being used with considerable success although these are not good examples of their use; both have a very aggressive and self-conscious appearance.

3: Chairs and table are interesting but the lamp-standard of cane seems to be carrying this medium too far.

5: This sleigh-like bed has considerable charm but might look even better with wood leg supports instead of the wrapped frame.

6 and 7 make an interesting contrast. The cabinet in the former is an attempt at refined elegance. The dining-room furniture seems to have been influenced by Italian design; the motif on the doors used once in a room might be effective, but repeated becomes boring.



FRENCH FURNITURE

continued from page 25

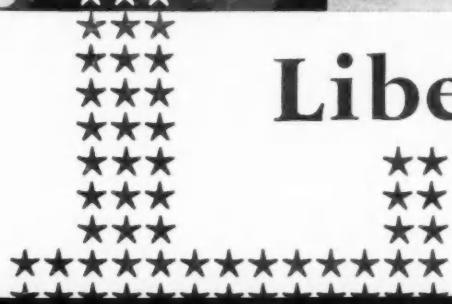


These chairs have very elegant arms. Although one sees this type of chair often, this particular one is recognisably French in detail.



The storage furniture (above) is interesting although the legs of the chairs seem dangerously thin at the foot.

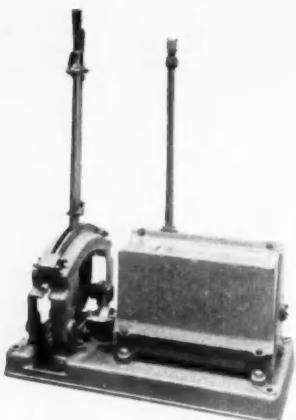
One is accustomed to seeing the severe lines of the furniture (left) in American illustrated magazines. Individually the pieces are good, but together they give a stiff appearance to a room which could be greatly helped by the pattern and soft lines of suitable textiles.



Liberty of Regent Street

for contemporary furnishing

1927



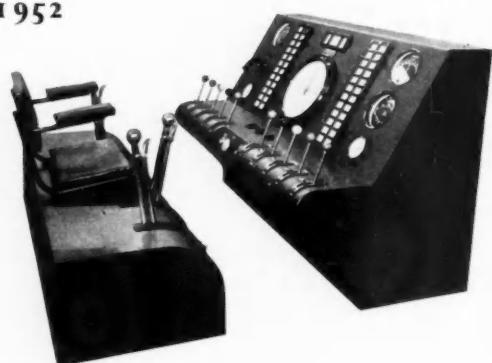
1939



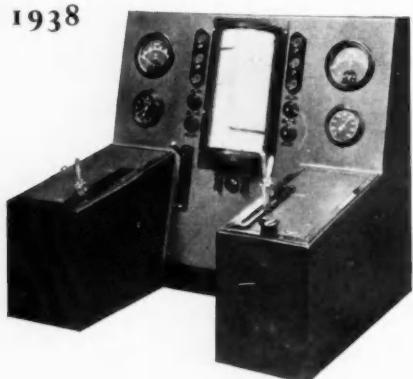
1937



1952



1938



1927

The first form of unification in winder control consisted of an operating lever, mounted on a bedplate in conjunction with a master controller and a backing-out switch. Later, an emergency-stop pushbutton, mounted on a rod at a convenient height for the driver's hand, was added; to be followed by the addition of an instrument.

1937

The first driver's control desk with the control levers, depth indicator, instruments, etc., mounted in one compact unit. The driver could now operate the controls from a sitting position.

1938

A complete change in design with the depth indicator, instruments and indicating lamps mounted in a near vertical position and two wings provided for the control levers which the driver sits between.

DESKS

Control gear for mine winders

ONE OF THE most important pieces of equipment in a mine is the winder which lowers and raises the miners with their equipment and raises the mined product. Like most mechanical equipment the design of winders has changed enormously, particularly with the advent of, first, the steam engine, and then electricity.

The first winding of coal was carried out manually by means of the common windlass with a hemp rope and a bucket. Later, a wheel and pinion arrangement was added to the windlass which was driven by a horse travelling round the pit shaft.

In 1710 Newcomen invented his steam engine for pumping, but it was not until 1790 that steam power was applied directly to the drum shaft for the purpose of winding men and coal. Cages or skips were hoisted by steel cables wound on to drums.

The first electric winders were installed early in

the present century. In a 1917 catalogue the British Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Co Ltd (later to become Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Co Ltd) illustrated typical electric winders already installed by them in all parts of the world.

The first electric winder controls resembled their steam predecessors. A mass of complicated mechanical connections with the large and heavy operating levers, crude depth indicators, instrument pedestal, pump motor starters and shaft signal gear were all separately mounted and positioned in various parts of the winding house. Very little improvement in design was made until the Metrovick "two-lever" system was developed in 1927 which simplified the complicated mechanical connections.

In 1937, Metrovick installed the first driver's control desk on the winder at Bickershaw Colliery. This flat-topped desk combined in one compact unit all the instruments, indicators and controls necessary for the operation of the winder, with the driver operating the controls from a sitting position.

The office-desk type of design was followed in 1938-9 by one in which the instruments, indicators and pushbuttons were mounted in a sloping vertical position at right-angles to the driver's viewpoint, with the control levers in two wing projections.

Modifications in appearance design, the addition of more controls and the use of different types of depth indicator, continued until 1952 when, for a particular installation, both the winding control and the control of the gear operating the mine-car handling plant at the shaft top were incorporated into one unit. This has produced quite a new design.

What of future design? Possibly the control levers will be made still smaller. Such an alteration could have a considerable effect on the shape and layout of the driver's control desk of the future.

1939

A desk for a double-drum winder. The railway signal type of control lever has been replaced by levers with large and more comfortable palm grips. The wings of the desk have sloping fronts and more equipment has been added. The driver operates the controls from a sitting position as in the 1938 design.

1952

A combined driver's seat and console desk for remote control of the winder and the mine-car handling plant at the shaft top. The control levers are embodied into the driver's seat, the wings have disappeared and the desk has assumed quite a different shape. A cleaner line is given to the desk by the absence of decorative strip. The levers for operating the mine-car handling plant have different coloured knobs. The indicating lamps are now under two hinged covers, easily released, to facilitate lamp changing. The inscriptions on the glass covers can only be seen when a particular lamp is lit.

Plastics are versatile

Seems a queer bunch of customers round this bar . . . intricate textile components . . . an aircraft jig . . . welding gun . . . press tool . . . covered cable. What brings them all together in the same advertisement? The answer is simple—they all rely on plastics made by Bakelite Limited—much of the bar included. Which just goes to show how versatile plastics are, how they can be designed to fit the job and do just what is required of them. If you've a design problem where the materials must have special properties such as resistance to heat or corrosion, if they've got to stand up to stresses or shock loading, or if they've just got to be plain good-looking—remember Bakelite Technical Service. Tell us what the material has to do, and we'll tell you whether Bakelite Plastics can do it.



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New Books

A Short Dictionary of Furniture, by John Gloag, George Allen & Unwin, 42s.

Mr John Gloag is chiefly known for his books on industrial design. In this volume, however, he has embarked on a more far-reaching and ambitious project, which he describes as "a short dictionary of furniture and various accessories of furnishing, made and used in England since AD 1100 and in North America since the mid-17th century" — a project which he has succeeded in carrying out in a single volume of 566 pages.

For the line illustrations Mr Gloag has used some 250 drawings in outline, the work of an admirable draughtsman, Ronald Escott; the remainder of his 630 illustrations being reproduced from the engraved designs for furniture shown in the books of eighteenth and early nineteenth century cabinet-makers, in details from Hogarth's engravings, wood-cuts from early books on furniture, from the catalogue of the 1851 Exhibition, drawings in *Punch* and from other contemporary line engravings in which furniture is depicted.

A valuable glossary or dictionary of 1764 names and terms — including some fascinating definitions of certain "accessories of furnishing," — occupies about three-quarters of the book. This is preceded by two excellently written chapters entitled "The Description of Furniture" and "The Design of Furniture," both full of useful definitions of furniture and interesting historical matter, which I can warmly recommend for careful study.

Short biographies follow of the leading eighteenth and nineteenth century English and American furniture-makers and designers and a concluding chapter brings the story of furniture-making up to date.

H. CLIFFORD SMITH

A Book of Typefaces, W. S. Cowell Ltd, distributed by Simpkin Marshall, 25s.

This book attempts to appeal both to the professional typographer and to the less experienced buyer of print; and moreover, the publishers explain the presence of coloured illustrations and decorations in its pages by saying that "many succeeding pages of type specimens can become confusing to the layman," which suggests a third class of reader. Inevitably, the book is to some extent a compromise.

Nevertheless, it is more successful than compro-

mises often are. Its use of colours especially is brilliant; nowhere is the effect garish, and at the same time it is not too closely restrained, as it might easily have been in a book of this nature. The fact that the *Book of Typefaces* is a very pretty book must not blind us to the fact that it is also a useful one. It is spirally bound, so that it will open flat; the "case" is continued round the spiral binding so that there is a spine to carry the title; the pages are thumb-indexed in the manner of an address-book, making it easy to turn quickly to any of the type-faces which are represented.

It is a pity that most of the examples illustrated have been chosen from nineteenth-century jobbing printing for they have little or no direct bearing on the work of the publisher or advertising manager today. And surely it is carrying the neo-Victorian mode a little too far to set the book's title and some of its most important headlines in an "Old English" type-face, Cloister Black.

Like Cowell's earlier *Handbook of Printing Types*, the new book was designed by John Lewis. The price at 25s for 75 pages is high, but the pages are wide and handsome. And anyone concerned with printing knows the impossibility of producing good work cheaply at the present time.

ALEC DAVIS

Art in the Watermark, edited by Walter Herdeg, Amstutz and Herdeg, Graphis Press, Zurich, 37s 6d.

There is a curious fascination about watermarks. A blank sheet of paper lies in front of you, telling you nothing till you hold it up to the light, when you may discover a trade-mark, a maker's name or a date.

The 363 watermarks in *Art in the Watermark*, which is edited by Walter Herdeg with an introduction by Armin Reuken have been selected mainly from the famous work of S. M. Briquet which contains more than 16,000 watermarks up to the year 1600. The earliest known watermark was found on a Bolognese paper from 1282, and is blocked on the cover of Herdeg's book. Watermarks are really trade-marks and anybody interested in the one needs to be interested in the other. The limitations inherent in making a design in bent wire lead to a very simplified form, and usually to a continuous line. There are many delightful examples in this book, and they will give great pleasure, amongst others, to admirers of Mr Steinberg. Few people realise that some names of paper sizes used in this country, such as Double Crown, Foolscape, Pot, etc come from the design of their original watermark. It is a pity that no English watermark found a place in this beautiful book, which is otherwise so representative.

BERTHOLD WOLPE

Design NEWS SECTION

New RCA awards

Gordon Russell, Director of the Council of Industrial Design, was made an Honorary Designer of the Royal College of Art at the College's Convocation last month together with Margaret Leischner, Sir Hugh Casson, and E. McKnight Kauffer. This is the first time that honorary diplomas have been awarded.

Henry Moore and P. H. Jowett were made Honorary Fellows of the RCA and J. R. P. Moon an Honorary Associate.

RETAILING

New look for books

Shop with a new look is the Beauchamp Bookshop in Kensington, London, the front of which has been modernised by Kenneth Bayes of Design Research Unit. Certain requirements set a limit to the alterations which could be made: (a) war damage had to be made good, (b) two separate premises were to look like a single shop and (c) the appearance was to be appropriate to a shop specialising in scarce and interesting books but without excessive expenditure over the war damage figure.

The main difficulty in unifying the frontage was the party wall which had to be retained as an unbroken fire resisting wall. For this reason a shallow showcase of fire-resisting construction was introduced in the centre of the frontage. This gave a sense of continuity between the two windows while providing the necessary fire break and is incidentally useful for the display of prints.

Existing doors have been reused, the position of the two entrances retained, and also the open shelves in the entrance passage. The vertical hardwood boarding is in mahogany, the

metal trim is anodised aluminium, the fascia is corrugated asbestos painted bright blue and the painted wood surfaces are grey. The lettering, in white, was designed by Charles Hasler. Contractors were Russell Bros (Paddington) Ltd.

Redesign at Cardiff

The soft furnishings department of David Morgan Ltd of Cardiff has been redesigned. It was not possible to make structural alterations to the old-fashioned shop so unsightly pillars were painted wine red to contrast with grey walls and counter tops. Counters have been remodelled by facing the sides with sycamore slats and using grey Formica for the tops. Designers were Gaby Schreiber & Associates.

Fittings for cards

New greetings card fittings arranged around three walls which enable cards to be clearly shown without overlapping have been fitted in the Early Court Road shop of W. H. Smith & Son Ltd. Additional cards are stored in drawers beneath the fitting and counters can be pulled out from beneath the card shelves.

Course on leather

The National Leathersellers' College, in conjunction with the Council of Industrial Design, is arranging a non-residential course in London called "Leather and the Retailer" from 15-19 September. It will be held at the National Leathersellers' College, 176 Tower Bridge Road, SE1.

The course aims to give retail staffs background information on the nature and special qualities of leather and to stimulate interest in the design of merchandise made from leather. The programme consists of lectures and discussions on leather in

sports equipment, dress, footwear, luggage and personal accessories, handbags and furnishings and manufacturing and design problems will be discussed. Students need only attend those sessions of particular interest to them. Visits will be arranged to tanneries and factories manufacturing leather goods. Enquiries should be sent to the Registrar, National Leathersellers' College.

MATERIALS

'Orlon' supplies for Britain

A new US plant for the production of *Orlon*, the new synthetic acrylic textile fibre, which begins production this month, may mean that supplies of this material will soon be available to British manufacturers. Distributors in this country are Brown & Forth Ltd (Clifton House, Euston Road, London NW1).

Orlon is said to be shrink and mildew resistant and moth proof and has high acid and alkali resistance and power of absorbing perspiration.

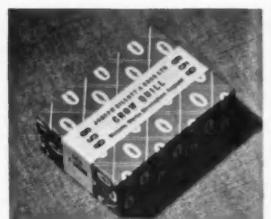
Ribbon for knitting

A lightweight rayon ribbon for knitting which has been developed in Britain by the Silk and Rayon Users Association is now in the shops. Called *Ribbonknit*, it is less than a quarter of an inch wide and is available in a number of shades in 50 yard lengths. A first series of six pattern leaflets with instructions for making various articles with *Ribbonknit* either alone or in conjunction with cotton, rayon or wool yarn are also available.

PACKAGING

Family look for pen packs

A uniform range of packs for the pen products of Joseph



Gillott pen packs before and after redesign.

Gillott & Sons Ltd (Birmingham) now replaces the odd assortment of boxes, labels and lettering which were used hitherto. The new pack, illustrated above with three of its predecessors, uses a nib motif to decorate the paper and uniform lettering which makes the different types more easily recognisable. It is proposed to use a different colour for each type of nib. (Designer: Miss F. E. Williams.)

COMPETITIONS

Petrol station awards

Results of the competition for the design of petrol filling and service stations in Britain have been announced and drawings and models of the winning designs will be exhibited at the Royal Institute Galleries, Piccadilly, London, from 11-28 August.

The competition, which was sponsored by Shell-Mex and BP Ltd, the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Design and Industries Association, was in three sections: for country, in suburban and main motorway service stations. First prize in both the country and suburban sections has been won by M. Gregory, an Australian, and in the main motorway section by G. M. Crockett. There were 518 entries.

RCA students in US

Two students from the Royal College of Art are in the United States studying and practising glass design for a year. Their scholarships are part of a plan initiated by Arthur A. Houghton Jr. of the Corning Glass Works



The Beauchamp bookshop in Kensington before and after redesign. Two separate premises now look like a single shop although the party wall has been retained.

and Steuben Glass for promoting closer cultural relations between the artists and designers of Britain and the USA.

The students are Keith New and Ronald Carter. Two American glass designers from Corning are to visit England for a similar course of studies.

The idea has been made possible by the Institute of International Education.

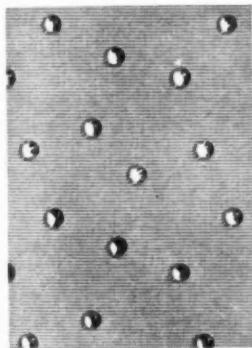
Footwear design contest

The annual footwear design competition organised by the journal *Footwear* is open to students of recognised art schools or colleges of shoe technology as well as to persons engaged in the boot and shoe industry. Entries, which may be in any of eight classes, must be received by 26 August. Winning entries will be displayed in the Fashion in Footwear exhibition.

NEW PRODUCTS

Rolled glass for building

Chance Brothers Ltd have introduced their second new pattern in figured rolled building glass since the war. It is called *Spotlite* and, as the illustration below shows, is decorated with an arrangement of small half-spheres which stand out from the background. The pattern has been devised so that adjacent panes do not need matching. It is based on a design of Sadie Speight.



The pattern on Chance's new *Spotlite* glass has been devised so that panes do not need matching.

Table of many uses

Furniture that serves more than one purpose is often over complicated and seldom popular in this country. However, if this sales-resistance is due to high prices then the *Prestopak* table illustrated here may find a much larger market than might be anticipated since it costs £4 11s 6d tax free. It may be used as a low occasional or games table, as a sloping chair-side writing table or with legs ex-

tended as a normal height card table. The loose panel covered in baize on one side may be used separately as a writing board.

The table is sold packed flat and is easily assembled with the use of hand screws. Oak, walnut or mahogany tops are offered with a beech frame and legs. It is made and designed by Sensinwood Ltd, Kirkby Industrial Estate, Liverpool.

PUBLICATIONS

The DIA Year Book, 1951-2, offers, like its immediate predecessors, a summary of the year's work, list of members and reference index to design organisations at home and abroad. The editor is Marie-Jacqueline Lancaster. As the Festival was dealt with in last year's issue, the main feature this time describes the International Design Congress, organised last September. Short extracts from talks given at the Congress by directors and managers are accompanied by illustrations from the speakers' firms. In London and the regional centres the activities listed in the review of the year's work show that the DIA has been extremely busy. The Year Book costs 1s and can be obtained from The Design and Industries Association, 13 Suffolk Street, Haymarket, London SW1.

CATALOGUES RECEIVED:
Lighting problems and their solution, the first of a new series from The General Electric Co Ltd; *Seventy-Five Years*, a well-produced booklet commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Xylonite Group which records the company's growth and development; and four new booklets from Bakelite Ltd dealing with *Warerite*, *Vybak* and *Bakelite*.



The *Prestopak* table is used as a games table or, with legs extended (right), as a writing table.

Achievement in Leather from Bolton Leathers Ltd illustrates in colour shoes made in twelve countries from *Florana* and *Boltonia* leathers. This attractively produced book was designed by Marketing Consultants Ltd.

Dollar Savings through Standards published by the Productivity and Technical Co-operation Division of the American Mutual Security Agency reveals a sharp rise of the standards movement in the United States since the war, especially in the past two years. The survey attempts to prove in terms of net savings the benefits attributable to standardisation.

fabrics in contrast to the exaggerated textures and artificial yarns that were used so extensively before the war.

Mr Morton is design director of Morton Sundour Fabrics Ltd and of its specialist branch Edinburgh Weavers and he took



Two of Alastair Morton's hand-woven fabrics shown in London recently.

EXHIBITIONS

Hand-woven fabrics

Interesting designs in handwoven fabrics and rugs by Alastair Morton were shown at a small exhibition at Heal's in London last month. Most of the fabrics were from natural yarns and Mr Morton has used the subtly contrasting textures of several natural wool fibres in most of his



Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*.

up hand weaving to help in the designing of fabrics for machine production. He believes, however, that hand weaving like all other handicrafts should also have its place in providing small quantities of well-made material of individual quality. The materials on show were woven for this purpose although some could be made on machine looms with slight modification. In many cases hand weaving and the varying control that is possible with it, is necessary to get the gradation of colour and texture that has been obtained.

Some of the fabrics and rugs shown in the exhibition are now on permanent display at the showroom of Edinburgh Weavers Ltd at 15 Cavendish Place, London W1.

Graphic arts in 1953

An exhibition of the work of members of the newly-formed Alliance Graphique Internationale will be held in Paris in 1953

in conjunction with the organisation's second Congress.

At the first Congress, recently held in London, it was decided that the AGI should comprise as active members creative artists in the graphic arts as applied to advertising, publishing and the mural arts.

Furniture of the future

"Tomorrow's Furniture" was an apt title for the exhibition which the Institute of Contemporary Arts recently held in London. Most of the pieces shown were projected by the designers without regard to saleability. All the furniture could be easily manufactured, however, and in one or two cases manufacturers are producing the pieces in quantity. Illustrated here is a chair designed by Robin Day, which was one of the better examples from the exhibition.

Wood engravings

The third post-war exhibition of the Society of Wood Engravers, which was shown at the Crafts Centre last month, included examples of wood engravings, colour prints and sculpture. There are two distinct trends within the Society: the development of small wood engravings for books and of decorative wall prints, mostly in colour.



Robin Day uses white cord on a metal frame for this chair of the future.

LETTERS

Selling to Australia

SIR: Once again the question of design and the export trade has been raised (April DESIGN). Whenever exports from the United Kingdom start to fall there is the suggestion that things would be better and a larger volume of business would be obtained if quality and designs were to be improved. The general implication is that the whole world except Britain is design conscious and is spurning British goods because they do not reach the high standards demanded by overseas countries.

When I was concerned with the export of certain British products to Australia and New Zealand I believed this because the Australian and New Zealand buyers wrote and told me that it was so.

I am now living in Australia and have visited New Zealand, and when it comes to an understanding of quality and design of manufactured products neither of these countries can approach Britain. Their own products are dreary and in many cases poorly made; there is very little which has had the hand of a designer on it. As far as imported goods are concerned the contemporary work of Britain is being ignored. There is no contemporary English furniture or glassware to be seen. Most crockery is in the worst of taste, and what little fine china there is by no means represents Britain's best and is very expensive. Textiles are good but no one has imported last year's Festival patterns.

Many of the retail stores in Australia have London offices. Is it that the staffs of these buying houses are indifferent to contemporary trends and have minds which are still thinking in terms of pre-war provincial standards: or are they afraid to send new ideas to Australia because they fear there will be no sale for them? Or is it that the British manufacturer, conscious that the Australian is not a discriminating buyer, is dumping his poorer quality out to this market?

I believe that Australia would respond to contemporary British design in consumer goods but the hardest job is to persuade anyone to import it, after all "Repro-Jaco" "Fat shiny suites" and the most hideous radiogram-cum-cocktail cabinets sell quite well and without much bother. (As they do in South Africa; see DESIGN, March 1952, p. 21.)

W. A. SMITH,
Broadway
N.S.W., Australia

Britain ahead in textiles

SIR: I have just completed a buying trip round Europe looking for modern furnishing textiles and would like to say how much I was struck by the advances being made in Britain. I have visited your country several times since the war but was not until last year impressed by much evidence of fresh thinking on design. This year I found plenty, a good deal of it, I imagine, due to the influence of your 1951 Festival.

Hardly any country in Europe is so advanced in textile design as Britain is today, particularly in the field of contemporary abstract prints. I can foresee, of course, some danger of such patterns falling into unskilled hands and becoming wearisome, for it takes a real artist to achieve a lastingly successful abstract pattern. Also, is there not some danger that if contemporary prints become fashionable the designs will date and the risk for

manufacturer and distributor will thus be much greater than at present.

I welcome, therefore, the attempts by some firms to introduce interest in texture and cloth and yarn construction alongside freshness of pattern and applied design, for there is in depth and variety of texture a great field for experiment, which I hope British designers will not overlook.

H. H. LIEBREICH
57 Long Street
Capetown
South Africa

Correction

Marshall Fabrics Ltd are the manufacturers of the nylon fabric illustrated on the right of the lower photograph on page 23 of last month's issue. It is a tone-on-tone printed sheer.

COID NEWS

Design Review, the COID's photographic index of good current British design, is now housed at the Council's headquarters, and the press, retailers, architects and designers are invited to make use of it. Owing to a cut in the Council's grant and a consequent reduction in staff, Design Review cannot be offered as a comprehensive buyers' guide, but it will contain illustrated and up-to-date information on many products in a wide range of durable consumer goods, a selection of which will be published regularly in DESIGN (see pp 4-7). The section on street furniture is retained and a topical section on Coronation souvenirs has been added. Duplicate prints of the photographs may be obtained from the Council's Photographic Library.

Design's typographer

Stuart Rose, MSIA, has been typographer and art editor of DESIGN since issue number 8 of August 1949. The present issue is the last for which he will be responsible for owing to a reduction in the grant of the Council of Industrial Design it has been found necessary to economise on outside consultants. From the September issue therefore the art direction of DESIGN will be handled by Peter Hatch, MSIA, who has for the last four years been responsible for all the Council's other publications.

Stuart Rose is consultant typographer to the Federation of British Industries and to Benham and Co Ltd, the printers of DESIGN. He is also art editor of Progress, the magazine of Unilever Ltd, and is typographer to the Anglo-American Council on Productivity.

Advertisements

Enquiries about advertising in DESIGN should be addressed to the Advertisement Office, Newman Books Ltd, 68 Welbeck Street, London w1. Telephone: WELbeck 3335.

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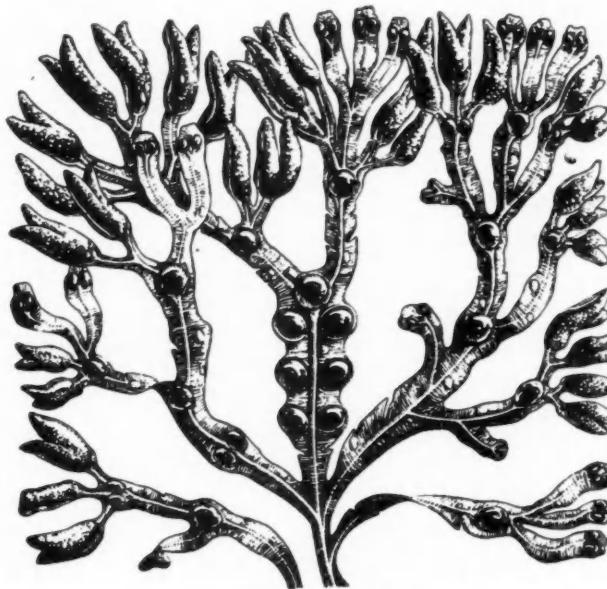
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sodium nitrate found in the desert region of Northern Chile. Because iodine is essential to health, it is sometimes added, in the form of potassium iodide, to table salt and animal feeding-stuffs. It is widely used as an antiseptic, and in the treatment of thyroid deficiency. Other iodine compounds play an important part in the sensitising of photographic films and plates, and in chemical analysis.

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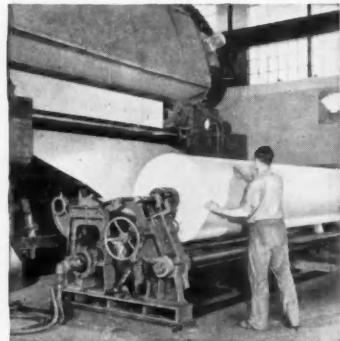




Scene reconstructed by Roy Curnow

EARLY IN THE 1890's, Commander Henry Bradwardine Jackson — knowing nothing of the work of Marconi — first conceived the idea that torpedo boats might announce their approach to a capital ship by the use of wireless waves. In 1895, in the torpedo-school ship 'Defiance' at Devonport, he began secret experiments on Admiralty instructions. Before the end of the year he had succeeded in transmitting, from one end of the ship, signals of sufficient intensity to ring an electric bell in the receiving circuit at the other. After meeting Marconi, who first visited England the following summer, he went rapidly ahead with the evolution of naval wireless telegraphy, making vital contributions to the development of world communications.

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